

### ***How do I apply for the Green Card Lottery?***

The 2008 Diversity Visa (Green Card) Lottery season is about to begin. The DV-2008 lottery registration period will run from Wednesday noon (Eastern Standard Time in the United States), on October 4, 2006 until Sunday noon, December 3, 2006. No applications will be accepted after that time, even if the computer system is busy, so please apply as early as possible.

The DV-2008 lottery will be conducted entirely electronically, including electronic entry. Paper entries are not accepted. The Department of State has established a dedicated website for the submission of E-DV entries, [www.dvlottery.state.gov](http://www.dvlottery.state.gov). Successfully registered entries will result in the display of a confirmation screen containing the applicant's name, date of birth, country of chargeability, and a date/time stamp, which can then be printed.

People may prepare and submit their own entries, or have someone submit the entry for them. Regardless of whether an entry is submitted by you directly, or assistance is provided by an attorney, friend, relative, etc., only one entry may be submitted in the name of each individual, and the person entering the lottery is responsible for insuring that the information is correct and complete. If your entry is selected, the notification letter will be sent only to the mailing address provided by you on the entry.

Most applicants disqualified from the application process are disqualified for submitting more than one entry per person or for submitting incorrect data. If someone assists you with the application procedures, please make sure that the biographical information provided is correct.

Please note that although many businesses may claim that success is “guaranteed” if you apply with them, there are no guarantees in the lottery process. Winners are chosen at random from the applications submitted electronically. The program is administered by the U.S. Department of States in the United States. Employees of the US Embassy in Tbilisi are not involved at all with the application process for the Diversity Visa lottery. If your entry is selected as a winner, however, the Department of State will forward your application to the consular section. Your visa case will be processed at the consular section at the Embassy.

Good luck with your application!

### ***What is the Electronic Visa Application Form (EVAF) and am I required to use it?***

As of October 1, 2006, all visa applicants will be required to complete the Electronic Visa Application Form (EVAF). Applicants who arrive for their appointments without a completed EVAF form will not be interviewed and will need to schedule a new visa appointment. The DS-156 and DS-157 forms will be required for all applicants. The DS-156 form is located at <http://evisaforms.state.gov> and the DS-157 form is located at <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/7769.pdf>. The forms must be completed in English.

If you do not have a personal computer, you may use public computers at any location—including at an internet café, or at any American Corner library in the country (free of

charge) or free of charge at some banks in Tbilisi (for example, TBC Bank, which accepts the payments for non-immigrant visa fees, has internet-connected computers available for public use in the main branch of the bank in Tbilisi). American Corners also have a great deal of information on the United States and are located in cities throughout Georgia. Please be advised that all applicants are legally responsible for the accuracy of the information provided on the application. If someone assists you with completing the application, please make sure that you understand what is being asked for every question. You must answer all questions on the forms.

The most common mistake people make is that they forget to bring the third page of the application (the one with the barcode) with them to the visa interview. This page is required. Other common mistakes are forgetting to complete all of the questions, not listing identification numbers, or not giving addresses and telephone numbers of the destination in the United States. Applicants with completely and accurately completed forms will be interviewed first on the day of the interview.

***I have relatives who have overstayed their visas and are living illegally in the United States. What are my chances of receiving a tourist visa? Would it be better if I didn't write about them on the visa application?***

This is a difficult situation, but you are always better off if you tell the truth on the application and during the interview. While the fact that your close family is in America without proper status may affect your application, if you can demonstrate to the consul that you have strong ties to Georgia this can be overcome. However, when the interviewing officer discovers that an applicant is not telling the truth, this is almost certainly going to result in a refusal. Furthermore, presenting false information (such as job or income data) or hiding important true information (like having been arrested) can mean that an applicant is banned from entering the USA—permanently. You will always be better off being completely honest with the consular officer.

***My U.S. Citizen grandchild is staying with me in Georgia for a few months. I have heard that U.S. Citizens should register with the consular section. Should I register my grandchild, even though she will only be here for a few months?***

We strongly encourage all American citizens to register with the consular section when overseas for any length of time. By registering, we are better able to contact you and provide you with information or make sure that you are okay in case of an emergency or natural disaster. Additionally, if your family in the United States needs to reach you in an emergency and are unable to get through, they may contact us—this is especially important for children who are here without their parents. By registering with the consular section, we can more easily locate you to pass important information. You may register online at: <https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs/> or come to the consular section with your grandchild (and his/her US passport) any weekday afternoon from 3 to 5 pm to complete the registration form. Please note that starting October 1, we will be open from 2 pm to 5 pm weekdays for American Citizens' Services.

***I would like to apply for a visa to study in the United States, but my friends tell me that probably won't qualify and that I shouldn't bother. I'm a serious student and I've found a university in the U.S. that I think would be a good match for me and my interests. What are my chances of qualifying for a visa?***

If you would like to apply for a student visa—or for applicants applying for any other type of non-immigrant visa—the best source of information regarding the application process is the consular section. Please start by looking at our website at <http://georgia.usembassy.gov/visas.html>, but if you have further questions, you may always contact us at [consulate-tbilisi@state.gov](mailto:consulate-tbilisi@state.gov). You should be cautious about accepting advice from outside parties about the application process. Given the high level of interest in Georgia in travel to the United States, many people, whether they are friends, family members, or individuals who claim to be experts on the visa application process, have beliefs about the non-immigrant visa process and relevant law that are simply incorrect. We urge you to come directly to the source and ask us rather than accepting the word of individuals who may be unintentionally (or otherwise) misinforming you.

***My passport is expired, but my visa is still valid. Do I need to get a new visa?***

No, you do not need a new visa. When you travel, you will just need to bring your new passport along with the expired passport that contains the valid visa. Always travel with both passports. Before traveling, please verify that your visa has not been damaged. If it has, you will need to request a new visa. Please keep in mind that your **passport** must be valid for at least six months from the start date of your trip to the USA. The **visa** can be used until its expiration date and merely represents the time during which you may apply for admission to the United States.

Many people mistakenly think that the validity period of a visa represents the time they are allowed to be in the United States. In other words, if your visa expires on October 3, 2007, you can travel to the U.S. and request admission until midnight on October 3, 2007. The immigration inspector at passport control decides how long you are authorized to stay, usually up to six months, but sometimes for a shorter period of time.

Remember that during your period of stay in the U.S. you cannot study or work unless you have a visa that specifically permits these activities. Those with a tourist visa (B-2), for example, cannot work or study (unless they receive authorization from U.S. immigration).

***How long can someone with a 'Green Card' stay outside the United States?***

Legal Permanent Residents (Green Card holders) may leave and reenter the U.S. freely; they do not need an additional visa. However, Green Card holders are expected to live permanently in the United States. A Permanent Resident who stays outside the U.S. for 365 days or moves permanently to another country loses legal status in the U.S. and must be sponsored again before returning to the U.S.

Permanent Residents who need to stay outside the U.S. due to work, school or other commitments should apply for a reentry permit from the Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services *before* leaving the U.S. For more information see: <http://uscis.gov/graphics/services/Emergency/index.htm>.

***Why was my immigrant visa refused? What do I do now?***

Consular officers are only allowed to issue immigrant visas to those applicants who qualify under the law. A visa can be refused for a variety of reasons. For example, your immigrant visa can be significantly delayed if you do not submit all the requested documentation on the day of your immigrant visa interview. An immigrant visa can be denied if you have a criminal record, if you lie during your visa interview, if you have lived in the United States without permission, or if your financial documents are not sufficient. Some refusals are permanent, and others are not.

On the day of your immigrant visa appointment, the consular officer will interview you and either approve your immigrant visa or refuse it. If the consular officer approves your visa, you will usually receive your visa the following business day. If the visa is refused, the officer will give you a letter listing the section of the law under which your visa was refused. The letter will also give you detailed instructions on what to do next. If you don't follow the instructions, your case will be delayed and you could lose your chance to live and work in the United States.

If your visa was previously refused, depending on the type of refusal, the consular officer may, or may not, be able to assist you. In some cases, you may have to request a waiver of an ineligibility from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). The consular officer will provide you with or tell you where to get the appropriate forms. In some cases, you may have to apply directly with DHS. The consular section must then wait for a decision from DHS before we are able to process your case to conclusion.

***I am a Georgian citizen, but I have been living and working in another country for the past several years. Where should I apply for my visa to visit the U.S.?***

All visa applicants have the best chance of qualifying for a visa in the consular district where they live and work. If you live and work in Georgia, you should apply in Tbilisi. If you live and work in another country, you should apply at the closest U.S. Embassy or Consulate. For a complete listing of U.S. Embassies and Consulates, including links to application procedures and appointment waiting times at every post, please visit <http://travel.state.gov>.